

Message Text

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PAGE 01 MANAMA 00670 111206Z

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FM AMEMBASSY MANAMA BAHRAIN

TO SECSTATE WASHINGTON DC IMMEDIATE 2184

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TAGS : MARR, EAID, BA

SUBJECT : MIDDLE EAST FORCE AND TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

REFERENCE : MANAMA 0662

SUMMARY: JUNE 11 FOREIGN MINISTER, PREOCCUPIED WITH SECURITY DECREE "CRISIS", ACKNOWLEDGED REGRETFULLY GOB HAD MADE NO FORMAL DECISION ON MIDDLE EAST FORCE NEGOTIATIONS, AND REALISTICALLY COULD NOT WITHIN NEXT FEW DAYS. FOR SAME REASON, HE SAW NO MERIT TO TRYING TO GET GOB TO FOCUS ON "CONFIDENTIAL LETTER OF INTENT". NATIONAL ASSEMBLY FOREIGN AFFAIRS COMMITTEE HAS NOW REPORTED FAVORABLY "SENSE OF PARLIAMENT" RESOLUTION CALLING FOR GOB TO TERMINATE NAVY PRESENCE BUT FOREIGN MINISTER CONFIDENT IT WILL NOT COME UP FOR DEBATE BEFORE NEXT FALL. FOREIGN MINISTER WOULD BE GRATEFUL FOR ANYTHING WE CAN DO TO MOVE FORWARD WITH TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE PROGRAM, INSOFAR JUNE 13 CONGRESSIONAL DEADLINE CONCERNED, IN ABSENCE EXCHANGE OF MIDDLE EAST FORCE DOCUMENTS. HE PROMISED TO MAKE EVERY EFFORT TO WRAP UP NEGOTIATIONS BY "END OF JUNE" BUT CLEARLY INDICATED GOB FIRST HAD TO GET SECURITY DECREE ISSUE RESOLVED ONE WAY OR ANOTHER. HE AGREED TO HOLD PRESENTLY UNRESOLVED JURISDICTION CASES IN ABEYANCE FOR AT LEAST A WEEK.

1. FOREIGN MINISTER CAME OUT OF EMERGENCY CABINET MEETING ON SECURITY DECREE ISSUE FOR OUR SCHEDULED JUNE 11 MEETING. HE APPEARED HARRASSED AND OBVIOUSLY WORRIED AS CABINET STRUGGLES WITH HOW TO DEAL WITH NATIONAL ASSEMBLY ON SECURITY DECREE.

SECRET

SECRET

PAGE 02 MANAMA 00670 111206Z

UNDERSTAND A SPECIAL CABINET SESSION WITH AMIR ON THIS ISSUE

SCHEDULED FOR LATER JUNE 11.

2. FOREIGN MINISTER SAID THAT, AT OUR LAST MEETING, HE HAD HOPED SECURITY DECREE PROBLEM WOULD BE OUT OF WAY AND THAT HE COULD HAVE DEFINITE ANSWER FOR US ON MIDDLE EAST FORCE NEGOTIATIONS BY JUNE 11. IN VIEW OF SUBSEQUENT PARLIAMENTARY DEVELOPMENTS, GOB HAD NOT EVEN BEEN ABLE TO FOCUS ON MIDDLE EAST FORCE QUESTION. HE REGRETTED THAT HE HAD NO REPLY FOR ME AND ACKNOWLEDGED QUITE FRANKLY THAT HE WOULD NOT HAVE ONE FOR AT LEAST A WEEK. I TRIED OUT ON HIM THE IDEA OF A CONFIDENTIAL LETTER OF INTENT IN THE ABSENCE OF FORMAL EXCHANGE OF DOCUMENTS TO MEET THE JUNE 13 DEADLINE. HE CONSIDERED THE IDEA BUT REGRETFULLY CONCLUDED THAT IT WOULD BE EQUALLY IMPOSSIBLE FOR THE GOB TO FOCUS ON SUCH A LETTER OF ITENT AND HENCE THIS WAS A NON-STARTER.

3. FOREIGN MINISTER SAID FOREIGN RELATIONS COMMITTEE OF BAHRAIN'S NATIONAL ASSEMBLY HAD REPORTED FAVORABLY THE SENSE OF PARLIAMENT RESOLUTION CALLING FOR GOB TO TERMINATE U.S. NAVY PRESENCE IN BAHRAIN. WHILE RESOLUTION IS NOW TECHNICALLY ON NATIONAL ASSEMBLY AGENDA, FOREIGN MINISTER EXPRESSED GREAT CONFIDENCE THAT PRIORITY BUSINESS WOULD MAKE IT IMPOSSIBLE FOR ASSEMBLY TO DISCUSS THIS RESOLUTION IN THE FEW NATIONAL ASSEMBLY MEETING REMAINING BEFORE ADJOURNING FOR THE SUMMER. HENCE HE IS CONFIDENT THAT THIS ITEM WILL NOT COME UP BEFORE NEXT FALL AT THE EARLIEST.

4. FOREIGN MINISTER EXPRESSED AGAIN HIS REGRET THAT GOB SEEMED TO BE UNABLE TO MAKE JUNE 13 DEADLINE FOR OUR NOTIFYING CONGRESS OUR INTENTION TO MOVE AHEAD WITH TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE PROGRAM USING FY 75 FUNDS. I EXPLAINED MY UNDERSTANDING THAT OUR POSITION ON THIS POINT IS NOW UNDER REVIEW AND THAT WE WOULD GIVE SYMPATHETIC CONSIDERATION TO POSSIBILITY MOVING AHEAD ON TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE NEGOTIATIONS EVEN THOUGH JUNE 13 DEADLINE FOR EXCHANGING NAVY DOCUMENTS HAD NOT BEEN MET. I POINTED OUT, HOWEVER, THAT THIS WAS BY NO MEANS A COMMITMENT ON THE PART OF THE EXECUTIVE AND THAT EVEN IF THE EXECUTIVE DESIRES TO GO AHEAD WE CAN MAKE NO COMMITMENT AT THIS STAGE THAT CONGRESS WOULD AGREE. FOREIGN MINISTER SAID HE UNDERSTOOD FULLY, APPRECIATED OUR WILLINGNESS TO REVIEW OUR POSITION, AND WOULD
SECRET

SECRET

PAGE 03 MANAMA 00670 111206Z

BE GRATEFUL FOR ANYTHING WE COULD DO TO MOVE AHEAD WITH TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE PROGRAM.

5. FOREIGN MINISTER THEN NOTED HIS EMBARRASSMENT AT HAVING BEEN UNABLE TO FORMALLY CONCLUDE MIDDLE EAST FORCE NEGOTIATIONS ONE WAY OR THE OTHER AND PROMISED TO DO EVERYTHING POSSIBLE TO REACH A FORMAL DECISION NOT LATER THAN "THE END OF JUNE". HE STRESSED AGAIN, HOWEVER, THAT HE SAW NO POSSIBILITY OF

GOB'S REACHING A DECISION WITHIN THE NEXT WEEK.

6. I NOTED TO FOREIGN MINISTER THAT THERE ARE TWO CASES INVOLVING JURISDICTION OVER MIDDLE EAST FORCE PERSONNEL WHICH ARE UNRESOLVED AND WHICH I NEED TO DISCUSS WITH HIM FURTHER. (ONE IS HUGHEN, MACK AND VAUGHN CASE, STATE 126818; THE OTHER IS AN AS YET UNSPECIFIED CHARGE, POSSIBLY AN ATTEMPT TO "BREAK AND ENTER", FOR WHICH A MIDDLE EAST FORCE SEAMAN WAS ARRESTED JUNE 9 AND IN WHICH SO FAR WE HAVE BEEN ABLE TO HEAD OFF ATTEMPTS BY BAHRAIN COURT TO CLAIM JURISDICTION.) I EXPLAINED TO FOREIGN MINISTER THAT BOTH OF THESE CASES MIGHT BE STICKY ONES INsofar AS JURISDICTION IS CONCERNED, THAT WE WERE IN NO PARTICULAR HURRY TO RESOLVE THEM BUT GOB, SINCE IT IS CLAIMING JURISDICTION, PRESUMABLY IS. I SUGGESTED, THEREFORE, THAT I WAS PREPARED TO DISCUSS THESE CASES WITH HIM THE FIRST CHANCE HE FOUND IT CONVENIENT AND WE AGREED THAT IT WOULD NOT BE FOR AT LEAST A WEEK.

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